

THE MIDDLE GAME

Volume 1, Issue 6

September 2003

NEIL BEASLEY'S BCF AWARD

The Leicestershire & Rutland Chess Association charity team tournament was a little different this year. The Association has run this pre-season warm up for many years. Teams of 4 play in a 5 round swiss, with 10 mins on each clock. No time for any sweet science in the games! The entry fees are donated to a Charity of the President's choosing. 2 trophies are up for grabs; one for the team scoring the most points and another using a handicap based on the average grading of the team. It has become custom over the past few years to present the trophies for the previous league season and Summer cup events.

This year saw an extra presentation with Neil Beasley formally receiving his BCF Presidents award. The BCF Chief Executive Roy Hepinstall came along to do the honours and was invited to play in the event, as was Lee Collier the MCCU Chief Executive who was also present. I think 2 chess Chief Executives playing in the same event may be first. Roy commented that he thought this sort of event was something his own league might like to consider.

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History of Staunton Chess Pieces

by Sean

Most of your "over the board" play will be with a Staunton pattern set – but do you know how these came to be the standard for competitive play? This article will shed some light on the matter – Ed

The increased interest in the game, particularly in international play during the late eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries, brought about a renewed demand for a more universal model for chess pieces.

The variety and styles of the conventional form begun in the fifteenth century had expanded tremendously by the beginning of the nineteenth century. Some of the more common conventional types popular during the period included the English Barleycorn, the St. George, the French Regence (named after the Cafe de la Regence in Paris) and the central European Selenus styles. Most pieces were tall, easily tipped and cumbersome during play. But their target sin was the uniformity of the pieces within a set. A player's unfamiliarity with an opponent's set could tragically alter the outcome of a game.

By the early decades of the nineteenth century, it was all too clear that there was a great need for a playing set with pieces that were easy to use and universally recognised by players of diverse backgrounds. The solution, first released in 1849 by the purveyors of fine games, John Jaques of London, sport and games manufacturers, of Hatton Garden, London, England, was to become known as the Staunton chess set after the Shakespearean scholar, author and the world champion, Howard Staunton (1810 - 1874).

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- + MCCU County Fixtures, Event results & much more

The tournament itself was a close affair with 4 teams all capable of topping the points tally going into the final round. Wigston 1 came out on top, the result hinging on a board where a furious flurry of moves were made as both flags were close to falling. Hinckley 2 a team of U100 county players, including 2 young ladies, secured the handicap trophy.

UK CHESS CHALLENGE

The British Land UK Chess Challenge Terafinal & Challengers Final took place the Source in Meadowhall Sheffield

The events both have a slightly unusual scoring system as 3 points are awarded for a win, 1 for a draw. The maximum score for 6 rounds was therefore 18 points. Unlike the earlier stages, which separated competitors into age groups, the finals pitted all ages against each other. Lorin D'Costa from Herts won his fourth successive title in the Terrafinal. Next years' entrants will be relieved to know that this was the last year he was eligible to play.

Midlands youngsters scored as follows in the Terrafinal :-

3 rd	13 pts	Sabrina Chevannes Warks U15
10 ^{th=}	10 pts	Kaiser Malik Warks U11 Amisha Parmar Notts U11
14 th	9 pts	Ankush Khandelwal Notts U12 Molly Moruzzi Staffs U13
26 ^{th=}	6 pts	Craig Whitfield Staffs U8

The Challengers event was split into 2 sections, top Midlands Scorers:-

Challengers A

2 nd	15 pts	William Bennet Rutland U15
4 ^{th=}	13 pts	Ammar Karim Warks U17
8 ^{th=}	12 pts	Gavyn Cooper Shrops U14

Challengers B

1 st	16 pts	Chris Dorrington Lincs U16
5 th	14 pts	Kishan Lakhani Notts U11
6 ^{th=}	13 pts	Lateefah Messam-Sparks Notts U11
9 ^{th=}	12 pts	Yangshi Yu Staffs U14

Results courtesy of UK Challenge press release.

Although Nathaniel Cook has long been credited with the design, it may have been conceived by his brother-in-law and owner of the firm, John Jaques.

The first theory is Mr. Cook had used prestigious architectural concepts, familiar to an expanding class of educated and prosperous gentry. London architects strongly influenced by Greek and Roman culture were designing prestigious buildings in the neoclassical style. The appearance of the new chessmen was based on this style and the pieces were symbols of "respectable" Victorian society: a distinguished bishops mitre, a queen's coronet and king's crown, a knight carved as a stallion's head from the ancient Greek Elgin Marbles and a castle streamlined into clean classical lines, projecting an aura of strength and security. The form of the pawns was based on the 'Freemasons square and compasses', however; another theory reflects the pawns form is derived from the balconies of London Victorian buildings. There were also practical innovations: for the first time a crown emblem was stamped onto a rook and knight of each side, to identify their positioning on to the king's side of the board.

The second theory is Jaques, a master turner, had probably been experimenting with a design that would not only be accepted by players but could also be produced at a reasonable cost. In the end, he most likely borrowed and synthesised elements from sets already available to create a design of sheer brilliance. The key was the use of universally recognisable symbols atop conventional stems and bases. Moreover, the pieces were compact, well balanced and weighted to provide a playing set that was as useful as it was understandable.

Our belief is that it was a combination of both theories with the synergy of Mr. Cook the entrepreneur and Mr. Jaques the artisan. Further to the design, the ebony and boxwood sets were weighted with lead to provide added stability and the underside of each piece was covered with felt. This afforded the players the illusion that the chessmen were floating across the board. Some ivory sets were made from African ivory. The king sizes ranged from 3.5 inches to 4.5 inches and the sets typically came in a caron-pierre case, each one bearing a facsimile of Staunton's signature under the lid.

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Jaques then approached his brother-in-law for advice. At the Patent Office, on March 1, 1849, Nathaniel Cook, 198, Strand, London, England, registered an Ornamental Design for a set of Chess-Men, under the Ornamental Designs Act of 1842. At that date, there was no provision for the registration of any design or articles of ivory, registration was limited to Class 2, articles made chiefly of wood. Mr. Cook was the editor for the Illustrated London News where Howard Staunton published chess articles and convinced the champion to endorse the chess set.

The advertisement possibly written by Mr. Staunton published as follows: "*A set of Chessmen, of a pattern combining elegance and solidity to a degree hitherto unknown, has recently appeared under the auspices of the celebrated player Mr. STAUNTON. A guiding principle has been to give by their form a signification to the various pieces - thus the king is represented by a crown, the Queen by a coronet, &c. The pieces generally are fashioned with convenience to the hand; and it is to be remarked, that while there is so great an accession to elegance of form, it is not attained at the expense of practical utility. Mr. STAUNTON'S pattern adopts but elevates the conventional form; and the base of the Pieces being of a large diameter, they are more steady than ordinary sets.*" Illustrated London News, September 8, 1849.

Staunton not only endorsed the product for Jaques of London but promoted it to an extraordinary degree including the lambasting and derision of any other design of chessmen then proposed. This may have been the first time that a celebrated name was used to promote a commercial product. The Staunton as it became known, became available to the general public on September 29, 1949.

The Staunton style, was soon the standard on which most tournament playing pieces have been made and used around the globe ever since. The low cost to produce the Staunton set allowed the masses to purchase sets and helped to popularize the game of chess. The Staunton set obtained the stamp of approval of the World Chess Federation, when in 1924 it was selected as their choice of set, for use in all future international chess tournaments. For over a century and a half, this style has been cherished by players around the world. The superiority of the design lay in its well-balanced, easily recognized pieces. Such was its success that it will be the style of choice for play to this day and for many years into the future.

FORTHCOMING EVENTS

Warwickshire Open Junior Chess Championships 2003

Please note that the Warwickshire Junior Chess Championships are being held in Solihull on 11th and 12th October (they are one day events). It is Open to all players under the age of 18 and is a London Junior Qualifier.

You can download entry forms from the Warwickshire site (junior pages) below
<http://www.soszynski.btinternet.co.uk/wca/>

Birmingham & District Chess League.

Will you please put a piece in Middle Game to publicise the Birmingham and District Chess League's 7th Annual Rapid Play Tournament that takes place on October 19th. Full details can be found on
<http://users.powernet.co.uk/rees/bdcl/rapidplay.htm>

6TH WOLVERHAMPTON RAPIDPLAY

The date and venue have been changed from the details on the BCF Calendar and will be held on Saturday 1st November at the University of Wolverhampton Compton Park Campus, Compton Road West, Wolverhampton. It is renamed the Robert Ward Memorial Rapidplay Chess Tournament, as a tribute to Robert Ward for his services to chess in the West Midlands and Staffordshire. There will be 3 sections graded under 190, 145 and 100. Entry forms from Geoff Rosser –
<mailto:g-d.rosser@blueyonder.co.uk>

VETERAN CORRESPONDENCE CHAMPIONSHIP

Peter Gibbs has asked me to draw attention to the Veterans Correspondence Championships for 2003/4. This event is open to players aged over 60 and costs a mere £5.00 to enter. Peter may be contacted on 01455 440236

BCF NATIONAL CLUB EVENTS

In the very first issue of The Middle Game I drew attention to the paltry number of entries from the Midlands in the BCF club events. The 2003/4 competitions are due to start in the next few weeks. The Rapidplay Handicap event is being brought forward to 9th November following requests to hold it at a different time of the year. Your club could win £200 for an afternoon of chess. If a club is successful in the standardplay events roughly 1 match every 6 weeks is involved. The average grading system applied to the Major & Minor sections means that the events are more flexible than the old grading bands that used to apply, especially for a club with a wide range of gradings amongst its members. For more details go to - <http://www.bcf.org.uk/events/bcfnatteam/index.htm> or ring 0116 260912.

EVENT RESULTS

4th LEEK CHESS CONGRESS

from Gus Brain

18th September 2003

The event was held on September 12-14th at Westwood High School. It saw 136 people take part, with 26 players in the Open and everyone else split roughly equally between 4 grading sections.

The Open saw a 3-way tie for 1st place. Stephen Gordon was one of 4 who shared 4th place, he caused a major upset by beating Zimbabwean International Robert Gwaze in round 3 (*game published in this issue*), and drawing with Danny Gormally in round 4.

Britannia Building Society Open

1st= 4/5 Colin Crouch
Danny Gormally
David Hulmes (Stockport)
4th= 3.5 Adam Ashton (3Cs)
John Bentley (3Cs)
Ameet Ghasi (Birmingham)
Stephen Gordon (3Cs)
Grading Prize – John Bentley

Lafarge Cement funded MCCU 2004 British Championship qualifying place David Hulmes
MCCU Individual Champion David Hulmes
North Staffs & District Individual Champion Alex Richardson (Cheddleton & Leek)

Leek United Building Society U180 Section

1st 4/5 Neil Moss (Oldham)
2nd= 3.5 Suzy Blackburn (Holmes Chapel)
Martin Burns (Stockport)
Geoffrey Laurence (Macclesfield)
David Risley (Macclesfield)
Paul Stephenson (Liverpool)
Conrad Westmoreland (Cheddleton & Leek)
Slow Starter prize – Martin Burns

Alton Towers U129 Section

1st 4.5/5 Gavyn Cooper (Newport)
2nd= 4 Matthew Evans (Cheddleton & Leek)
Nigel Livesey (Bourne End)
Slow Starter prize =
David Buckell
Marc Jouannet (Macclesfield)
Alec Westmorland (Cheddleton & Leek)

Cottage Delight U104 Section

1st= 4/5 Kristian Chesters (Macclesfield)
Stephen Llyod (Chester)
3rd= 3.5 Douglas Bramley (Spondon)
Veer Ghasi (Birmingham)
Clifford Hanson (Nelson)
David Scorer (Nelson)
Nichola Thomas (Thamesdown)
Slow Starter prize – Michael Rabbitte (Swinton)

Westwood School U80 Section

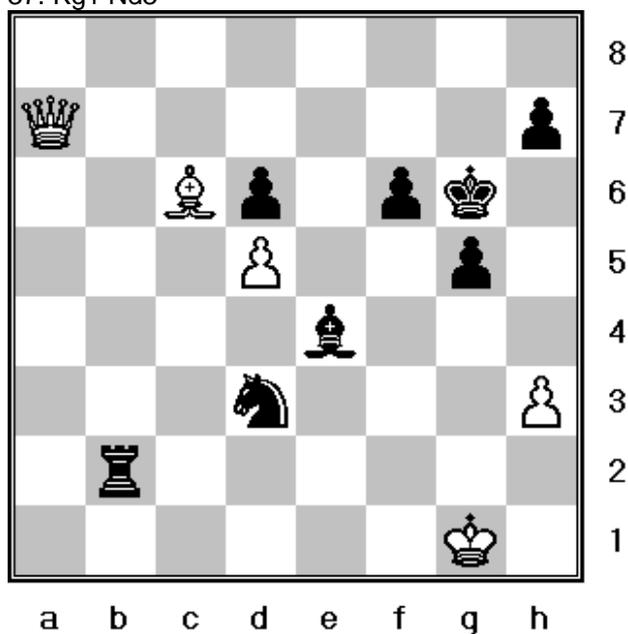
1st 4.5/5 Paul Clapham (Newcastle u Lyme)
2nd= 4 Paul Rabbitte (Swinton)
Robert Stokes (Scunthorpe)
Slow Starter prize – Bernard Stringer (Northwich)

Kerry gold Team Prize

Macclesfield

White: Qwaze
Black: Gordon

1.e4 c5 2. Nf3 g6 3. d4 cxd4 4. Nxd4 Nc6 5. Nc3 Bg7
6. Nde2 Nf6 7. g3 O-O 8. Bg2 d6 9. O-O Bd7
10. h3 Rb8 11. a4 a6 12. Kh2 b5 13. axb5 axb5
14. f4 Qc7 15. Nd5 Nxd5 16. exd5 Na5 17. Ra2 Rfc8
18. g4 Ra8 19. b3 Nb7 20. Rxa8 Rxa8 21. Nd4 Bxd4
22. Qxd4 Qxc2 23. Bb2 f6 24. Rc1 Qxb3
25. Rc3 Qxb2 26. Rc8+ Rxc8 27. Qxb2 Ra8 28. g5 Kf7
29. gxf6 exf6 30. f5 Nc5 31. Bf1 Bxf5 32. Bxb5 Rb8
33. Qe2 Be4 34. Bc6 g5 35. Qa2 Kg6 36. Qa7 Rb2+
37. Kg1 Nd3



38. Be8+ Kf5 39. Bb5 Ne5 40. Ba6 Kf4 41. Kf1 Ra2 42.
Qe7 Rxa6 43. Qxf6+ Bf5 44. Ke2 Ke4 45. Qxg5 Ra2+
46. Kd1 Bxh3 47. Kc1 Bf5
48. Qf6 Ra5 49. Qxd6 Rxd5 50. Qh6 Nd3+
51. Kc2 Bg6 52. Kc3 Nf4 52... Nc1 53. Qxc1
53. Qh1+ Kf5 54. Qb1+ Rd3+ 55. Kc4 h5 56. Qe1 Kg4
57. Qg1+ Rg3 58. Qd1+ Rf3 59. Qg1+ Kh3
60. Qh1+ Kg3 61. Qg1+ 61. Qe1+ Rf2 62. Kd4 Kg2
63. Qe7 Re2 64. Qb7+ Re4+ 65. Kc3 h4
66. Qb2+ Ne2+ 67. Kd2 Ng3 68. Kd1+ Re2
69. Qf6 Bc2+ 70. Kc1 h3

LEAMINGTON RAPIDPLAY

PREMIER (U200)

1st Kieran Smallbone (Oxford Univ) 5.5/6
2nd Andrew McCumiskey (Solihull) 5
3rd William Bennet (Oakham) 4.5

U160

1st Callum Gordon (Checkmate) 6/6
2nd John Vickers (Banbury) 5
3rd Ian Webster (Oxford Univ) 4.5

U130

1st Ian Gallaher (Rugby) 6/6
2nd Kishan Lakhani (Notts) 5.5
3rd Charlotte Wilcox (Rushall) 5

U100

1st Adrian Fowkes (Nuneaton) 5.5/6
2nd= Johns Rayner (Nuneaton)
Ray Bettam (Chelmsley) 5
Craig Knight (Leics)

U70

1st S Treocanin (Stourbridge) 5.5/6
2nd= Ieuan Fenton (Oswestry)
Gary Preece (Solihull Youth)
Steve Weston (Chelmsley) 5

MCF AUTUMN CONGRESS

REPORT FROM JILL BARBER

The MCF Autumn Congress took place 27-28 September. Harry Lamb and Ray English maintained the excellent but relaxed organisation that we have come to expect in these events.

First prize was shared between Neil Moss of Ashton and Tim Seymour of Richmond Juniors on 4.5 points.

The U150 prize was shared by David Hopkin of South Manchester, George Glover of Carlisle and Mark Taylor of Rochdale on 3.5 points.

Michael Carroll of Swinton and Dennis Davies of Blackpool scored 2.5 points to tie for the U100 grading prize.

BDCL TROPHIES

WITH THANKS TO PETER GIBBS

The Birmingham & District League have 2 trophies awarded annually, The Morry –Wood Memorial committee was set up to deliberate on these awards, which are in memory of W Ritson Morry and Baruch H Wood. They both made their mark on the international scene, but did much work for West Midlands chess, especially the BDCL.

The W Ritson Morry Trophy for outstanding achievements by a junior was awarded to 15 year old Callum Gordon. He plays for the Warley Quinborne & Checkmate clubs. His results at junior level have been impressive and culminated in the award this year of the BCF Gold Certificate.

The Baruch H Wood Trophy for the best game finish was won by 19 year old Jeremy Fallowfield of Stourbridge. His father taught him to play chess, but he did not take it too seriously until 18mths ago when he broke his leg playing football and had to look to more sedentary activities.

Here is the game which won the trophy –
White: Jeremy Fallowfield
Black: Josh Hennion
French Defence

1. e4 e6
2. d4 d5
3. Nc3 Nf6
4. Bg5 Be7
5. e5 Nfd7
6. h4

Originated by the Romanian Adolf Rubin in the 1890s but it was taken up by the French player Eugene Chatard and Alexander Alekhine; hence its name the Alekhine-Chatard Attack. It offers a pawn, but White has fine compensation after 6 ... Bxg5 7.hxg5 Qxg5 8. Nh3.

6. 0-0
Out of the frying pan into the fire 6 C5 is best. 7. Nb5 f6 8. Bd3 a6 9. Qh5+ Kf8 10. Rh3 axb5 11. Bh6 gxh6 12. Qxh6+ Kf7 13. Qh5+ with a draw by perpetual check. Another move is

11 Qa5+

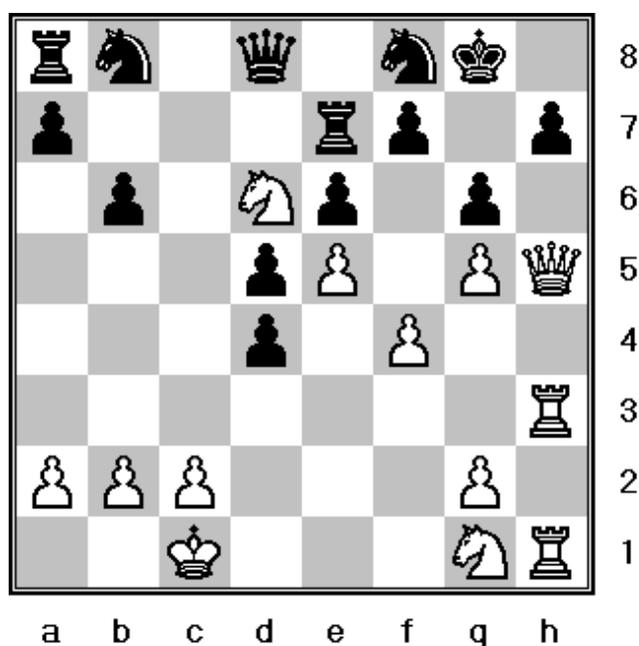
7. Qg4 Re8
8. 0-0-0 b6
9. Bd3 c5
10. f4 Bxd3
11. Rxd3 c5

Black undermines the pawn chain

12. Nb5 Bxg5

Stronger is 12 F5 13. Exf6 Bxf6 but white is better.

13. hxg5 cxd4
14. Nd6 Re7
15. Qh5 Nf8
16. Rdh3 g6



This gives White the opportunity to make a brilliant Q sacrifice. Black can hang on with 16 Rd7 but with no long term hope of extricating himself.

17. Qxh7 Nxh7
18. Rxh7 Nc6

it is mate in two after 18 Qc7

19. Rh8+ Kg7
20. R(1)h7 mate

NYCA EVENT 27th September

WITH THANKS TO GRAHAM HUMPHRIES FOR DETAILS

This Annual event is usually run covering 2 age groups. Owing to some confusion regarding the lower age section some teams had come along as U12 and some as U13, all of these teams played in the same section, but U12 & U13 Champions were declared. The other event was for U18's.

U12's

Berkshire	33/60
Lancashire	31.5
Kent	31.5
Norfolk	31

U13's

Sussex	41/60
Hertford	39
Warwickshire	35
Richmond	33.5
Wiltshire	32
Cheshire & NW	29
Gwent	29
Buckingham	28
Oldham	26
Leicestershire	25
Glamorgan	23
Gtr Manchester	13.5

U18's

Hampshire	45.5/60
Warwickshire	44.5
Norfolk	37.5
Wiltshire	31.5
Richmond	31
Cheshire & NW	29.5
Lancashire	29
Oldham	28
Glamorgan	27
Berkshire	15.5
Gtr Manchester	9.5

There are usually NYCA events for U14 & U16 age groups, for further information contact Kevin Staveley on 01443 772750 or Graham Humphries on 01384 571486.

BCF COUNTIES RAPIDPLAY

28TH SEPTEMBER SPONDON
DERBYS

The Counties Rapidplay at Spondon on 28th September was a disappointing event. Only Derbyshire with 2 teams and Warwicks could organise teams. The event was won by Yorkshire 1 with 41 point from 60 ahead of Essex with 38½ Warwickshire 34½, Derby 1 28½, Bedford and Yorkshire II with 26 and Derby II with 17½. The Roy Woodcock Cup was won by his own county Warwicks with an adjusted score of 30½, from Yorkshire II on 30, Yorkshire I on 29, Essex and Derby 1 on 26½, Bedford 22 and Derby II on 21½.

The surplus will be divided equally between the MCCU, Braille Chess and the English Deaf Chess Association. The event was controlled by Cyril Johnson. Grateful thanks are due to Bert Loomes for the use of an excellent venue at Spondon, and for his and other Derbyshire player's assistance.

THE GAME

She makes her move and hits the clock
On my poor Kingside she's got a lock
Down the file her Queen comes like a truck
This time I think I'm out of luck
Her Blue eyes sparkle as she captures my Rook
She's playing so fast, it must be all Book
She think she's got me up a tree
Yea, guess she spotted that Mate in three
My clock is running Tick Tock, Tick Tock
I'm between the hard place and a Rock
A quick glance at her & I see her grin
She's ready to chalk up another Win
Flag is hanging, it's my move, and YES, by Heck
Now it's a Draw by perpetual Check!
I'm kinda glad I didn't win, I hate to be rude
But it is disconcerting when she plays in the Nude

Chandler Yergin

CHESS QUIZ

A quiz involving questions about openings & tactics. Some of you may find the solutions to quite easy – correct answers appear on a later page – but no peeking in advance please!

Question 1:

What is one of the main aims of the Sokolski opening (1. b4)?

- ◆ achieve a rapid exchange of pieces
- ◆ control the white squares
- ◆ control the a1 - h8 diagonal
- ◆ control the kingside

Question 2:

Which piece does black often try to exchange in the French defence (1.e4 e6)?

- ◆ Queen Knight
- ◆ King Bishop
- ◆ Queen's Bishop
- ◆ King Knight

Question 3:

What is the main strategic plan for Black when playing the King's Indian Defence (1 d4 Nf6 2 c4 g6 3 Nc3 Bg7 4 e4 d6)?

- ◆ attack on the queenside
- ◆ control the a8 - h1 diagonal
- ◆ exchange centre pawns and control the e-file
- ◆ Block the centre and attack on the Kingside

Question 4:

In the Larsen opening (1 b3), what is white's main strategy?

- ◆ open the centre
- ◆ attack on the queenside
- ◆ control the a1-h8 diagonal
- ◆ control the white squares

Question 5:

In the Alekhine Defence (1 e4 Nf6) what is black's main strategic idea?

- ◆ stop the white pawns from progressing
- ◆ entice the white pawns forward and then undermine them
- ◆ attack on the queenside with his blacksquare bishop
- ◆ quick kingside attack with knights

Question 6:

What is the idea of a gambit opening - such as the Kings Gambit (1 e4 e5 2. f4)?

- ◆ establish a secure king position before opponent mobilises
- ◆ to improve pawn formations
- ◆ to buy time for an attack later in the game
- ◆ To deflect pawns from the centre allowing rapid piece
- ◆ development to attack the weakspots left exposed

Question 7:

When one side (let's say White) places his queen on d2 and a bishop on e3, the reason for this is usually what?

- ◆ pressurise the queenside
- ◆ to exchange of his darksquare bishop for blacks fianchettoed
- ◆ bishop
- ◆ defend the king
- ◆ prepare for a queenside pawn advance using the bishop as a
- ◆ defending piece

Question 8:

What is the main underlying rationale of the Caro-Kann defence for black (1 e4 c6 2 d4 d5)?

- ◆ control the b5 square
- ◆ support the d5 pawn without blocking in the queens bishop
- ◆ block the c-file
- ◆ prepare for the move b5 to attack on the queenside

Question 9:

What is the main positional drawback for black of the Dutch defence against the Queens Pawn opening (1 d4 f5)?

- ◆ Queenside weaknesses
- ◆ dark square weaknesses
- ◆ white square weaknesses
- ◆ knight weaknesses

Question 10:

Which of the following is a common configuration for whites pieces in the English opening (1 c4)?

- ◆ Nc3, Bg2, Rb1, Bg5, Qc2
- ◆ Nc4, Rb1, Bd3, Qh4
- ◆ Nd2, Bc4, Rc1, Qd2
- ◆ Nd3, Re1, Bg2, Kh6

MCCU COUNTY FIXTURES

M.C.C.U. OPEN CHAMPIONSHIP 2003-2004

<u>WEST</u>	<u>ZONE</u>	<u>DATE</u> 2003	<u>EAST</u>	<u>ZONE</u>
Staffs Worcs	G Man f Shrops	11-Oct	Lincs Derby	Leics Warks
Shrops Worcs	Staffs G Man	1-Nov	Warks Leics	Lincs Derby
G Man Staffs	Shrops Worcs	10-Jan	Lincs Leics	Derby Warks
28-Feb SEMI-FINALS MAJOR MINOR				
27-Mar FINAL MAJOR MINOR				

M.C.C.U. U150 CHAMPIONSHIP 2003-2004

		<u>DATE</u> 2003		
Warks Notts	Staffs G Man	27-Sep	Leics A	Bye
G Man Warks	Staffs Leics A	25-Oct	Notts	Bye
Staffs G Man	Notts Leics A	22-Nov	Bye	Warks
2004				
Warks Staffs	G Man Bye	24-Jan	Leics A	Notts
Leics A Notts	Staffs Warks	21-Feb	Bye	G Man

- (1) Warwicks moved to EAST ZONE to balance teams/matches after Notts withdrew
 (2) Shropshire AWAY to Worcestershire following last season's default.

M.C.C.U. U175 CHAMPIONSHIP 2003-2004

		<u>DATE</u> 2003		
Norths	Leics	8-Nov	Warks	Notts
Warks	Norths	29-Nov	Notts	Leics
Leics	Warks	17-Jan	Norths	Notts

M.C.C.U. U125 CHAMPIONSHIP 2003-2004

		<u>DATE</u> 2003		
Staffs Warks	Shrops Worcs	11-Oct	Leics Derby	Notts Bye
Notts	Staffs	1-Nov	Shrops	Derby
Shrops Staffs	Warks Worcs	6-Dec	Leics Notts	Derby Bye

M.C.C.U. U100 CHAMPIONSHIP 2003-2004

		<u>DATE</u> 2003		
Staffs Leics	Warks Shrops	27-Sep	Bye	Notts
Warks Staffs	Shrops Bye	25-Oct	Notts	Leics
Notts Shrops	Warks Staffs	22-Nov	Bye	Leics
Staffs Shrops	Notts Bye	24-Jan	Warks	Leics
Notts Leics	Shrops Staffs	21-Feb	Bye	Warks

		<u>DATE</u> 2004		
Derby Warks	Staffs Notts	10-Jan	Leics Worcs	Shrops Bye
Warks Worcs	Staffs Shrops	31-Jan	Notts Leics	Derby Bye
Leics Worcs	Warks Derby	28-Feb	Shrops Staffs	Notts Bye
Derby Notts	Warks Worcs	27-Mar	Staffs Shrops	Leics Bye

Note - Derby have 3 away matches due to previous default/concession of fixtures

MCCU PUBLICITY – THE FUTURE

The MCCU is not a wealthy organisation and so must always “count the pennies”. As reported in the last issue of The Middle Game, I managed to stave off calls to drop hard copy distribution of the Newsletter. This was on the grounds that there were still those without Internet or email facilities. I asked all recipients of hard copy to enquire amongst their members & provide an email alternative if possible. The response to this call has been poor. Thank you to those few that provided details. I have been trawling through publications and websites and have located possible email addresses for a number of clubs who have been receiving hard copy. I have sent an email to these, but the feedback from has also been poor.

The cost of postage, printing, envelopes & copying is not insignificant, nor is the time expended in getting all of these tasks done. Every £ the MCCU spends on hard copy Newsletters is a £ that cannot be spend elsewhere. It only costs pennies for a club member to run off a copy on their home printer to share with those fellow members without email/internet facilities. Where I have an email address I will **not** be sending out a hard copy, unless the club concerned can provide a good reason.

My search of publications & websites has made me aware of conflicting information concerning clubs in some associations and leagues. I am contacting various people with a view to clarifying clubs and contacts and would be grateful of those concerned would respond. I cannot hope to ensure all Midlands clubs receive information if I do not know that they exist.

Those of you who receive email alerts concerning the Newsletter will find the system changing. I am currently using my own personal email facilities, but there is now a limit on the number of email addresses I can dispatch to in an hour. However, there is an alternative, which is to use a “groups” facility. I will be transferring the chess addresses over to this. I will have to do this gradually, as the facility only allows the transfer of 10 email addresses a day. You will have the opportunity to

“unsubscribe” at any time by emailing a “unsubscribe” address, & anyone else who might be interested will be able to apply to join. The group will allow the circulation of any other Midlands chess information. If congress organisers would like the chance to circulate entry forms free of charge they will be able to do. I have scanning facilities, so if you don’t have your entry form on a file, you will just need to send me a hardcopy. Subject to acceptable content, I will happily circulate other items. I have set up the group so that messages must be approved by me as the group “moderator”, they cannot simply be sent directly to others by a group member. You will be able to post a message, which I will review & will send on if I am happy. There is a limit of 1 Meg on the size of attachments, which can be sent. When you receive a message you should only see my email address and your own, unless an email address has intentionally been included in the body of the message e.g. because a congress organiser wants you to mail entries/enquires to them.

This should streamline the issue of alert messages & provide additional facilities for distributing information across the Midlands.

Please continue to send contributions for the Newsletter to my personal email address juliedjohnson@yahoo.com or telephone 0116 2609012

A GAME OF POETRY?

Little by little the pieces and squares began to come to life and exchange impressions. The crude might of the queen was transformed into refined power, restrained and directed by a system of sparkling levers; the pawns grew cleverer; the knights stepped forth with a Spanish caracole. Everything had acquired sense and at the same time everything was concealed. Every creator is a plotter; and all the pieces impersonating his ideas on the board were here as conspirators and sorcerers. Only in the final instant was their secret spectacularly exposed. -

Vladimir Nabokov

A CAPTAINS LOT

With thanks to Dave Pardoe

In an intriguing clash between the current and previous MCCU U150 champions, Gtr Manchester came out winners after a very close and hard fought encounter.

The day started early for the Gtr Manchester side and my group took the scenic route over the Peaks via A6 and Matlock. It was a fine day so we saw the sights in all its early autumn splendour. However, before the match, one of our players, John Rita, complained of stomach pains and as we neared the venue we had to drop him off at a local hospital. We learned later that he needed an appendix operation.

The match started late following some preliminaries in which we presented the Notts team with their trophy as champions. As the match progressed it became clear that it would be a close fought battle, with Notts leading narrowly from the start. As events unfolded more drama occurred when the Gtr Manchester captain, Dave Pardoe, suddenly collapsed on the upper deck with back spasms -Shakespeare couldn't have scripted it better. Fortunately my opponent recognised the problem and offered me some aspirins to ease the pain. I was clearly unable to continue and he very sportingly offered me a draw. I regained my composure and was able to observe several interesting games in progress.

As a measure of the closeness, the score at one point was 6 - 5 to Notts with roughly 40 minutes remaining. One of my team came over to me and remarked "it's not looking too good, we're losing 3 of the remaining games". I'd looked at the games and felt that there were some unclear positions that looked interesting.

Gradually the match neared its conclusion, like the finish of a classic horse race. You could almost hear the TV commentator; "one furlong to go and it's neck and neck". Suffice it to say that Greater Manchester "stayed the distance and came home by a short head", winning 9 games to 7 to open the new seasons campaign.

I did however return home missing my Motorola mobile phone, my MCCU grading book and some papers with chess info written on the back. If anyone finds them, please let me know.

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**Combination is a possible impossibility! It is a divine spark which exists independently of all the other chess ideas and illuminates the chess game as a meteor. –**

**Saviely Tartakower**  
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BCF AGM

REPORT FROM CYRIL JOHNSON

The BCF AGM was held in Peterborough, a rare visit to the EACU. The Management Board meeting saw the debut of Roy Heppinstall in the chair, and a substantial turnout heard that the final accounts revealed a loss of less than £1,000 largely due to the excellent financial results from the championships the year before. John Philpott was thanked for his holding the financial fort for a year.

The AGM, chaired by Gerry Walsh, heard and discussed the directors' reports. An excellent discussion took place concerning disability on the Home Chess Report. The director undertook to produce the guidelines for events for discussion at the November Board Meeting. It was agreed that he could go ahead for setting up a group to cover the disabled. Disability also featured during the report of the Congress Director.

The fall of the number of schools entering the BCF Schools Championship was raised. The Controller was informed that if he contacted LEAs, they might distribute the forms for him.

The Grading List had expanded because of the number of clubs per player growing to be all encompassing.

The following were elected: Gerry Walsh President & FIDE Delegate; Roy Heppinstall Chief Executive Officer; Robert Richmond Finance Director; Rupert Jones the new International Director; Cyril Johnson, Home Chess; Claire Summerscale Women's Chess; Peter Turner Junior Chess and Education; Matthew Turner Coaching; Neil Graham Congress Chess; David Levens Marketing; Chris Majer Planning and Grading; Bruce Holland Membership and IT; John Philpott Chair of Finance Committee and Paul Buswell Chair of Constitution Committee.

For long service to the BCF; Stewart Reuben was elected as a Life Vice President.

It was agreed to set up a working party to discuss changing the name of the BCF to something, which represented the fact that we are essentially concerned with English Chess.

Changes were made so that the quora for meetings were based on those persons physically present for meeting, not just the proxies held.

The meeting was very constructive and held in an excellent spirit. It is hoped that this is a harbinger of things to come.